

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An image processing apparatus, comprising:

an input part that inputs hyperdocument data and coupling information for specifying related information related to an image element constituting a document image; and

an embedding part that embeds the coupling information to be superimposed over at least part of the image element to form the document image of the hyperdocument data inputted by the input part,

wherein a configuration of pixels plotted embedded areas are different from that in ordinary plotting areas.

Claim 2 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the document data contains appearance information that defines the image formation positions of the image element on the document image, and the embedding part performs embedding based on the appearance information.

Claim 3 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the coupling information indicates a location of the related information.

Claim 4 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the coupling information specifies information indicative of a location of the related information.

Claim 5 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the coupling information specified the related information itself.

Claim 6 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the embedding part embeds the coupling information in a form or color in which the coupling information is difficult to identify visually.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): An image forming medium on which an image constituted by an image element is formed, wherein coupling information from hyperdocument data for specifying related information related to the image element is superimposed over at least part of the image element.

Claim 8 (New): The image processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the appearance information is determined based on logical information.

Claim 9 (New): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an identification generator that generates identification and manages correspondences between the identification and the coupling information.

Claim 10 (New): An image processing method comprising:

inputting hyperdocument data and coupling information for specifying related information related to an image element constituting a document image; and  
embedding the coupling information to be superimposed over at least part of the image element to form the document image of the hyperdocument data inputted,  
wherein a configuration of pixels plotted embedded in areas are different from that in ordinary plotting areas.

Claim 11 (New): The image processing method according to claim 10, wherein the document data contains appearance information that defines the image formation positions of the image element on the document image, and the coupling information is embedded based on the appearance information.

Claim 12 (New): The image processing method according to claim 10, wherein the coupling information indicates a location of the related information.

Claim 13 (New): The image processing method according to claim 10, wherein the coupling information specifies information indicative of a location of the related information.

Claim 14 (New): The image processing method according to claim 10, wherein the coupling information specified the related information itself.

Claim 15 (New): The image processing method according to claim 10, wherein the coupling information is embedded in a form or color in which the coupling information is difficult to identify visually.

Claim 16 (New): The image processing method according to claim 11, wherein the appearance information is determined based on logical information.

Claim 17 (New): The image processing method according to claim 10, further comprising generating identification and manging correspondences between the identification and the coupling information.

Claim 18 (New): An image processing apparatus comprising:

an input part that inputs hyperdocument data and coupling information for specifying related information related to an image element constituting a document image; and

an embedding part that embeds the coupling information to be superimposed over at least part of the image element to form the document image of the hyperdocument data inputted by the input part,

wherein image concentration of the coupling information is changed depending on image concentration of an area which the coupling information is embedded.

Claim 19 (New): The image processing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the image concentration of the coupling information increase when the image concentration of the area is lower than a predetermined value.

Claim 20 (New): The image processing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the image concentration of the coupling information decrease when the image concentration of the area is higher than the predetermined value.